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A CAHNERS/R.R. BOWKER PUBLICATION THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF BOOK PUBLISHING MAY 24, 1991 $2.50

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Publishers Weekly

VOLUME 238 NUMBER 23 — THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF BOOK PUBLISHING — MAY 24, 1991

ISSN 0000-0019

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By Robert A. Carter

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to the consumer, some with a blatant disregard for the bookstores. It's not only direct competition, it's a form of remaindering new books, offering frontlist at a discount without informing the stores, and thereby undercutting our list prices," he says.

Peter Grenquist, the AAUP's executive director, is sanguine about the progress the UPs are making in their sometimes tentative, sometimes aggressive invasions of the trade market. "There are university presses calling on agents now, and they do get into competition with each other for star academic authors. Once universities felt that their own campuses were inviolate, but now other presses are poaching there."

Grenquist also feels that the UPs these days have much more sophisticated staffers than before, and a lot of people working for them with trade publishing experience. "They're particularly alert to publicity and marketing possibilities, and probably get a disproportionate share of review space in the *Times* and the *New York Review of Books*."

And Grenquist says that the members of his association were filling a vacuum left by those trade publishers who have virtually stopped publishing so-called midlist books.

How do trade publishers react to these criticisms? At a recent AAUP meeting, Donald Lamm, chairman and president of Norton, warned of "stiff resistance" if his academic brethren attempted "to poach trade titles from the commercial presses." He also noted that the university presses operate from "a privileged sanctuary: tax-free status, university subsidies, foundation grants, low-cost labor, below-market rents."

Where does that put university press publishing today? At a crossroads, it would appear. All of them would undoubtedly like to move more deeply into the trade marketplace, but few if any of them wish to take on the high-rolling risks of mainstream trade publishing. They will not be seen taking part in the high-priced auctions or bidding for blockbusters. They will continue to publish in the areas they know best, in the hope that while disseminating scholarly research and the advancement of learning, they may incidentally—or deliberately—bring out titles that the general reader will want as well. □

Retail Ordering Patterns for UP Titles

A recent *PW* survey of booksellers asked questions about the size of the university press market and the selection process used for ordering UP titles. The preliminary results are in, and some interesting numbers emerge.

All the figures noted are based on 175 bookseller respondents (1000 surveys were mailed out). The final results will be covered in *PW*, Aug. 2, with the report on the Association of American University Press meeting in Naples, Fla. A preliminary report on UP titles in libraries will appear in *PW*'s May 31 Pre-ALA Library Special.

Surprisingly, close to 30% of the bookstores report that they do not carry UP books in their stores. The least likely to carry UP titles were specialty independent stores and national chain bookstores. Geographically, stores in the mid-Atlantic and the West South Central areas were least inclined to carry UP books. Those stores (70% of respondents) that do stock UP publications carry about 336 titles from about 15 different presses; 43% of these books are on regional topics. The ratio of hardcover to softcover is 34% to 66%.

About 5% of total store space was allocated to UP titles and only a handful of respondents noted that they reserve a special space for these books.

Initial orders are placed through wholesalers about 30% of the time; for reorders, the figure is about 45%. Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Gordons, Bookpeople and NACSCORP, in descending order, were the most frequently used wholesalers for UP titles. Almost 40% of retailers said they would order from Ingram first and about 20% listed Baker & Taylor as first choice. These numbers would most probably increase significantly if wholesalers would expand their UP title selection, as almost 70% of the booksellers cited too low inventories and/or limited selections as problems they experience in ordering from wholesalers.

About 46% of stores noted that UP sales reps call on them, and a high 91% were satisfied with the level of information provided by the reps.

The most important sources of information on new UP titles, according to retailers, are customer requests, UP catalogues and reviews in trade/professional magazines. About 66% of booksellers rely most often on *PW* for reviews of UP books, followed by 27% for *New York Times Book Review*. While reliance on reviews was high, booksellers were skeptical when asked to evaluate the effectiveness of review quotes in ads for purchasing decisions—27% said these quotes were "very effective" or "effective," while 65% said "somewhat effective" or "not effective."

Other criteria of major importance when deciding to stock a particular title were listed as: customer requests (85% noted that this was extremely important); subject matter (84%); author's reputation (77%); and book reviews (63%).

At what price point would a bookseller refuse to carry a hardcover UP title? While almost 57% noted "none," the average price point that would deter purchase was $47.

Point-of-purchase and floor displays were not popular merchandising items for UP books. The most popular promotion materials are "good quality posters." Interestingly, about 57% of the booksellers feel that university presses do not provide adequate marketing support for their titles.

—DAISY MARYLES

University Press Titles in Bookstores
(1990 preliminary data)

	Average gross sales of UP titles	Average no. of UP titles	% of UP titles of regional interest
General & Specialty Independents	$ 14,994	350	45%
College/University	25,069	534	19%
Regional Chain	10,516	79	63%
National Chain	N.A.	62	25%

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Publishers Weekly (ISSN 0000-0019) RPUSA 123397457 is published weekly with the exception of the last week in December and with additional issues in January, February and August. Second Class postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Publishers Weekly, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302.** All editorial and advertising correspondence should be addressed to the office of publication: *Publishers Weekly*, 249 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011; telephone: 212/645-0067; telex: 12-7703; fax: 212/645-5409. Address circulation correspondence and changes of address to *Publishers Weekly*, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302; telephone 1-800-842-1669; in Canada and all other countries, telephone: 1-614-382-3322. Printed in USA. SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: U.S.A.: 1 year $119, 2 years $199, 3 years $279. Canada: 1 year $177, 2 years $301, 3 years $426. Air delivery to all other countries: 1 year $260, 2 years $442, 3 years $624. (Remit in U.S. funds only.) *Publishers Weekly* is published by Cahners Publishing Co., a Division of Reed Publishing USA, 275 Washington St., Newton MA 02158-1630. Terrence M. McDermott, President; Frank Sibley, Executive Vice-President; Robert T. Brawn, Sr. Vice President/General Manager; Jerry D. Neth, Sr. Vice President/Publishing Operations; J. J. Walsh, Sr. Vice President/Finance; Thomas J. Dellamaria, Sr. Vice President/Production & Manufacturing; Ralph Knupp, Vice President/Human Resources. Bowker Magazine Group is also an affiliate of R. R. Bowker Co., Bob Krakoff, Chairman of the Board; Ira Siegel, President. *Publishers Weekly*™ is a registered trademark of Reed Properties Inc., used under license. Chairman; Ronald G. Segel, Chairman and CEO; Robert L. Krakoff, President and COO; William M. Platt, Sr. Vice President. Cahners Publishing Company, a Division of Reed Publishing USA ☐ Specialized Business Magazines for Building & Construction, Research, Technology, Electronics, Computing, Printing, Publishing, Health Care, Foodservice, Packaging, Environmental Engineering, Manufacturing, Entertainment, Home Furnishings, and Interior Design. ☐ Specialized Consumer Magazines for Child Care, Boating, and Wedding Planning.

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